

Remarks

Claims 1-7 were pending. Claims 3-6 have been withdrawn from consideration based on the previous election of 12/21/07. Claims 1 and 7 are amended. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, and 7 are pending.

Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and passage of the claims to allowance.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner has indicated that the Information Disclosure Statement filed on January 31, 2006 is incomplete, in that the form PTO-1449 was not provided. However, upon review of the US PTO's PAIR system, Applicants have noted that form PTO-1449 was correctly identified and submitted via EFS-Web on January 31, 2006, as indicated by the EFS Acknowledgment Receipt of the same date. However, the document is incorrectly listed on the Image File Wrapper as "NPL Documents".

For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants are providing another copy of the form PTO-1449 for review.

§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1, 2 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mansfield (US 5,838,850). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Mansfield does not disclose the claimed "auxiliary support section." In the remarks section of the Office Action, the Patent Office alleges that Mansfield discloses the recited auxiliary support section, yet the Patent Office does not specifically point out the corresponding element in Mansfield. Based on the remarks in the Office Action, Applicants believe that the Patent Office alleges that either set of clamping pads 34/36 or 24/26, or the cleaving hammer 38, correspond to the claimed structure.

However, the claimed auxiliary support section is a separate element from the clamp sections, the blade section, and the pusher section. For example, in the exemplary embodiments of Figs. 1 and 8, an auxiliary support section 54 is an independent element that is movable to a position between the clamps, and thus separate from the clamp sections 14, and also separate

from the pusher section 18 and the blade section 16. This separate structure is completely missing in Mansfield, which in contrast teaches a clamp section (either clamps 24, 26 or their replacement pads 34, 36) and a pusher 40 having a hammer 38 (See Mansfield Figs. 1 and 4).

In order to further clarify the inventions claimed in claims 1 and 7, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 7 to recite "an auxiliary support section provided separate from the clamp sections" and "providing an auxiliary support member separate from the clamp sections."

Accordingly, for at least the reasons above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 7 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mansfield has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or in order to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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